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RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN  
DE RUEHTO #0242/01 0581337  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 271337Z FEB 07  
FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6902  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP 0161

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000242

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR HTREGER  
AF/RSA FOR MHARPOLE  
USAID FOR AFR/SA  
G/TIP FOR RYOUSEY

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE: Update on Actions to Counter Trafficking in Persons

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1. SUMMARY. The first few weeks of February were characterized by a flurry of government, NGO, and Embassy activity concerning trafficking in persons (TIP) in Mozambique. On February 6 the Norwegian Embassy hosted a TIP stakeholder forum for members of civil society, NGOs, media, donor representatives, and the diplomatic community. On February 7 poloff visited trafficking shelters in Malelane, South Africa and Moamba, Mozambique, as well as the Ressano Garcia border crossing to better understand the problem and help direct USG assistance. On February 8 the Mozambican government, in conjunction with local NGOs, hosted a public forum to present and debate a draft TIP law. The events of early February demonstrate a willingness by the government and civil society to move forward in the fight against trafficking in persons. End Summary.

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STAKEHOLDER FORUM TURNS ONE YEAR OLD  
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2. The TIP stakeholders forum began in March 2006 as a Post-organized effort to bring together principal players in Mozambique's anti-trafficking effort. After the initial meeting, the Norwegian Embassy has hosted several subsequent gatherings. While no members of the Mozambican government were present at the most recent meeting on February 6, the event was nevertheless well-attended by key NGOs and the diplomatic community. The main objective of the forum continues to be the sharing of ideas, initiatives, and concerns.

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VISITING THE PLAYERS  
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3. On February 7 poloff and visiting G/TIP official Rachel Yousey called on several players in the fight against trafficking -- including people at two shelters, an NGO, and officials working on the Mozambican/South African border -- to obtain an overview of the current situation and ascertain areas where the USG may best provide assistance. The first visit was to Amazing Grace Children's Center for trafficking victims in Malelane, South Africa, near the border with Mozambique. Amazing Grace has been functioning in Malelane since the 1990s and is well-known and respected by police authorities, social workers, and the NGO community in the region, who regularly bring suspected trafficking victims to the center for care, training, and eventual reintegration. The center currently has 40 children (all under age 18), of whom approximately half are Mozambican citizens. Despite the high percentage of Mozambicans, Amazing Grace representatives were unaware of the existence of the

Moamba shelter, only 70 miles away in Mozambique.

¶4. Poloff and G/TIP's Yousey next visited the border community of Ressano Garcia, on the Mozambican side of the South Africa border, to meet with senior immigration and border guard officers. The officers lamented their lack of resources and training, but insisted they had good relations with their South African counterparts and had made several arrests of suspected traffickers in the previous year (Note: In the discussion it was apparent that there continues to be some official misunderstanding between trafficking and smuggling of persons. End note.). Once again, neither of the two officials was aware that the Moamba shelter (approximately 30 miles from the border) had been functioning since June 2006.

¶5. While at Ressano Garcia, a visit was also made to a group of Scalabrini nuns, who operate a welcome center for repatriated Mozambicans, as well as a school, orphanage, bakery, and skills center for hundreds of vulnerable children. The nuns have been working at the border for 12 years and are well known by the Mozambican border authorities in Ressano Garcia. The nuns work with vulnerable children. They have two activists on the border screening for trafficking victims and have, in the past, sent several trafficking victims to the Moamba shelter. While they have not had contact with the shelter in several months, they expressed a desire to renew their cooperation. Post will facilitate this renewed linkage.

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PROBLEMS AT MOAMBA  
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¶6. The final visit was to the Moamba shelter, which is partially funded by the USG and the German NGO, Terre des Hommes. The shelter received small grants (a Democracy and Human Rights Fund grant and a Economic Support Fund grant) in 2005-06 for victims' assistance, psychological counseling, educational workshops, and reintegration. Operational since June 2006, the shelter has experienced significant growing pains. For example, while the shelter has space for up to 80

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children, there are currently 15 children at the shelter, of whom only one could be identified as a victim of trafficking; the remainder are victims of abuse or are vulnerable orphans and runaways.

¶7. Another challenge involves staffing issues. The shelter employs a project coordinator and psychologist (both of whom are based in Maputo, 30 miles distant), as well as a guard, a cook, and a social worker (all of whom work on the premises). The project coordinator resigned in November and has yet to be replaced. A psychologist based in Maputo visits the shelter only twice a month. (Comment: Post and the Terre des Hommes representative agree that the shelter would be more functional if all staff lived on-site. End Comment.)

¶8. The Moamba shelter also suffers from a lack of resources and supplies. There is one completed building that houses a small office/kitchen and a large sleeping area. While there are plans to build a cafeteria, a second area for housing (to separate the children by gender), a bathroom, and a storage facility for food, the center has not been able to secure funding for this additional construction. Another crucial problem continues to be the lack of a reliable source of water. Currently water is brought in jugs from Ressano Garcia and Maputo, but this process is expensive and unreliable due to lack of transportation. An additional concern is the lack of activities for the children. The shelter sits on five hectares of land in an isolated setting. With few resources to purchase games, toys, books, and other educational materials, the children are often left with little to do.

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POSITIVE MOVEMENT ON TIP LAW  
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¶9. There has been positive movement since November 2006, when the Charge and emboffs met with the Justice Minister to express concern regarding delays in the drafting of anti-TIP legislation. A third

draft has been finished, consisting of 33 articles, which has been well-received by the NGO community. The process of becoming a law is potentially long and complicated, however - the draft must be presented to the Council of Ministers (scheduled for February 21), and upon approval will be submitted to the National Assembly for debate.

¶10. In preparation for submission to the Council of Ministers, the NGO Rede Came has worked with the Justice Ministry to organize a series of public forums throughout the country to introduce the draft law to the public and solicit feedback. The first forum was held in Maputo on February 8. Despite limited publicity, approximately 100 people were in attendance, mostly from the NGO community and civil society. Aside from several mid-level officials from the Justice Ministry who presented the law, there were few government representatives and even fewer "common citizens." (Note: However, the forum took place on the same day as the highly publicized visit of Chinese Premier Hu Jintao. End note). A debate followed the presentation of the law, but was limited to technical legal considerations more than a discussion of public perceptions of the law. Most daily newspapers and two television stations provided coverage of the forum and the importance of the law. Subsequent forums were held in the central province of Zambezia on February 12 and the northern province of Nampula on February 14.

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COMMENT  
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¶11. The visit by a US-based G/TIP officer not only provided a good opportunity to call on important government and civil society players involved in trafficking issues, but also to evaluate the difficult situation of the Moamba shelter. We will be meeting with the project implementer to encourage better communication between the shelter, Mozambican border authorities, and NGOs working on the border. The rather swift movement of the draft trafficking law in recent months is a positive development, but it is still a significant challenge to make the public aware of the trafficking issue.

JOHNSON